

LANESBOROUGH FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 17, 2008

Members Present: W. Stevens, R. Brower, A. Terranova, A. Flynn  
Guests Present: E. Kristensen, G. Bean, R. Wade (Assessors)  
R. Tinkham (Cable Access Committee)

Meeting Called to order at 7:10 PM, in the Lanesborough Library

**Discussion with Assessors:**

The total salary number has been revised to reflect the correction in the individual salaries from those figures presented in the last meeting. The new total of salaries is \$28,967, which reflects a 5% increase from last year. The Assessors have split up the hours among the three individuals, such that no Assessors are now eligible for benefits. They will be picking up duties that were accomplished with consultants to save the expense of the consultant and providing the services at a lower cost to the town.

The consultant fees have been reduced considerably in the expenses, but they also added a technology support requirement to be used to up-date computers and software. The total expenses are level funded from last year at \$15,550.

The changes in Clause 41C (Senior Exemption Options) were reviewed briefly as they had been discussed in the earlier meeting.

The request to eliminate personal property tax on accounts less than \$10,000 was discussed. The State DOR limits the value of second home contents to 2% of the building assessed value. Therefore, a \$200,000 assessed dwelling is calculated to have \$4,000 worth of contents, and at the present tax rate, is taxed at \$57.50 or \$14.38 per quarter. There are 294 accounts less than \$10,000 with a total value of \$683,910 that would bring in \$9,384 if ALL were collected. As a large number are not paid, the effort to collect these is not justified by the time nor the cost, even in small claims court.

**Discussion regarding the Local Access Cable:**

Ronald Tinkham presented the committee with the figures for the expenditures of the Local Access Cable Committee. Line Item 103 was funded at \$50.00 during the May 2007 Town Meeting, and the Finance Committee transferred \$1,000 from the Reserve Fund to purchase needed equipment. With the purchases to date, there is a balance remaining in Line Item 103 of \$40.54.

The Town also authorized a revolving account at the town meeting for the Cable Commission, with a spending limit of \$326.00. Shortly after the town meeting the town received an additional \$302 from Charter Communications. The Board of Selectmen (without the approval of the Finance Committee) authorized that the additional monies

received could be expended. Further, the town received a third payment of \$285 in March from Charter. Mr. Tinkham asked that the Finance Committee vote to increase the FY-08 revolving fund to the total \$913.00 received to date. After some discussion the Finance Committee voted (4-0) to limit the FY-08 revolving account to \$628.00 to reflect the first two payments, and leave the last payment of \$285 for the FY-09 revolving fund. It was also suggested that the Cable Committee consider the other income from sales of DVD's and donations, in the request for the revolving fund for FY-09.

It was noted that the Revolving Fund Article at the Town Meeting stipulated that the fund would consist of Franchise Fees received from Charter Communications, and did not allow for money from sales of DVD's to be included in the fund in FY-08.

**Baker Hill Road District: (Ronald Tinkham):**

The amount to be paid by the BHRD for police salaries and expenses has been set at \$209,141.

The STRAP Grant monies will be \$9,750 and the payment in FY-09 will be the last STRAP payment.

The BHRD will be paying \$13,000 for half the expense of a new police cruiser.

**MGRHS Budget (Ronald Tinkham):**

As of this date Williamstown is estimated the maximum contribution that they can afford is 3.5%, which would put Lanesboro increase at approximately 2.5%. At this time the Finance Committee will leave the figure at 3% until the final figures are presented to the Committee.

**Line Item Budget:**

The line item budget was presented and a number of line items were "approved as requested" It was voted to limit all town employees (except those in the bargaining unit, and the Assessors) to 3% for FY-09. A number of line items were held for discussion at a future meeting.

Since all the dollar values for the articles were not available, the discussion and recommendations on the articles were postponed until a future meeting.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be at the Lanesborough Elementary School for the School Budget Hearing at 7:00 PM in the Lanesborough Elementary School.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectively submitted,

William V. Stevens, Chairman